

Executive Summary

The purpose and framework of the State Development Plan have been established by the Legislature in RSA 9-A. The statute directs the Office of Energy and Planning to assist the Governor in preparing and updating the plan every four years, starting October 1, 2003. The State Development Plan incorporates the collective work of state, regional, and local governmental units and reflects the vision of the State's citizens. Fundamentally, it includes policies in areas related to the orderly physical, social, and economic growth and development of the state, all of which reflect the principles of smart growth delineated in RSA 9-B.

The Plan provides a basis for identifying critical issues facing the State, determining state priorities, and allocating limited state resources. Ultimately it will serve as the State's overall planning document—as the basis for policy and program development by the various departments of state government and to guide future agency plans.

Amendments to RSA 9-A, passed during the 2002 legislative session, established the goals and policies to be addressed in the State Development Plan. This same piece of legislation (Chapter Law 229 of 2002) required a coordinated process for the development of state, regional, and local master plans and directed master plans to promote smart growth. The State Development Plan, in addition to determining state priorities and allocating state resources, considers regional and local land use plans. In turn, regional and local plans

are encouraged to be consistent with the state plan. This session law, in conjunction with Chapter 178 of the same year, set forth the required and suggested content for state, regional, and local master plans.

The State Development Plan must set goals and policies relevant to the following:

- Overall vision emphasizing smart growth
- Land use
- Transportation
- Public facilities
- Housing
- Economic development
- Natural resources
- Natural hazards
- Recreation
- Utility and public service
- Regional concerns
- Cultural and historic resources
- Implementation

There are many connections and cross references between the State Development Plan (RSA 9-A) and the State's smart growth principles (RSA 9-B). Smart growth, is defined as the control of sprawl, which is the excessive use of land per unit of development or a scattered and unplanned land development pattern that results in an increased consumption of land and resources. Smart Growth can take a variety of forms, many of which are identified in RSA 9-B, vibrant commercial activity within traditional downtowns, strong community identity, traditional settlement patterns, locating municipal buildings and services downtown, alternative transportation, attractive landscapes, and a healthy environment.

RSA 9-B also calls for a coordinated and comprehensive effort by state agencies to promote economic growth, resource protection, and planning policy to encourage smart growth. Although it is the responsibility of all of the state's municipalities to engage in their own planning efforts, the state and its many agencies play an important role in encouraging or influencing patterns of development. Therefore, the State Development Plan provides a smart growth platform to guide agency siting, grants, awards, technical assistance, and other actions affecting land use and resource consumption.

This State Development Plan begins with a vision statement and ten goals to shape New Hampshire's future. Each of the ten goals are cross referenced to the required topics. None of the topics are presented in isolation, reflecting the true and integrated nature of planning.

Recent trends appear early in the Plan, providing data to support the vision and goals. The trends data includes an

overview of demographic, housing, economic, transportation, and land use changes and projections.

The next ten chapters of the Plan following the Vision and Recent Trends, are based upon each of the individual goals. For each of the ten goals, there are five strategies, as well as numerous policies, program developments, and state priorities to implement the vision, goals, and strategies.

The implementation section then details how the State can incorporate the Plan's ten goals and 50 strategies. Every implementation action identified in the Plan is incorporated into a matrix that identifies whether it requires a new appropriation or other funding sources, legislation or an executive order, or new or revised administrative rules. Additionally, the time frame to complete each action and the responsible agencies are identified.

The final chapter discusses the methodology utilized to develop the State Development Plan. In particular, the time frame to develop the plan and public participation are described, along with the draft preparation and review process.

Once approved, the Plan will remain in effect for four years. It will guide the actions of the State and regional and municipal authorities in applying smart growth principles and to attain the vision set forth for New Hampshire.

Vision and Goals

A vision statement identifies the direction a community—whether a municipality, region, or the State—wishes proceed and articulates the interests of the citizens the plan serves. It establishes a future image based upon collective community values. The vision guides a master plan's goals and objectives. When preparing a master plan, or in this case the State Development Plan, which is structured similar to local and regional master plans, the vision directs all other sections of the plan.

Per statute (RSA 674:2,II(b)), one of two local master plan requirements is to include a vision section. The vision section is required to contain a set of statements which “articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.” Local master plans may include numerous additional components in addition to the requisite vision and land use sections.

State statutes identifying regional development plan contents defer to those of the State Development Plan. As it was mentioned in the Executive Summary, the State Development Plan is required to address 13 components, including a vision tied to the State's Smart Growth principles, a land use section and many of the other sections identified as optional for local master plans. The State Development Plan's vision directs the other sections of the

plan. As required by RSA 9-A:1,III(b)(1), the vision is established as an overall statement, as well as a set of goals that articulate the desires of the public relative to the future. The combined goals form a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement the vision, with special emphasis on maximizing the smart growth principles in RSA 9-B.

The State Development Plan's vision was developed through a series of stakeholder meetings held through 2002 to 2005 (see Methodology section). The vision below is the foundation upon which the Plan's 10 goals and 50 strategies are founded and shapes New Hampshire's future.

VISION STATEMENT:

To support New Hampshire's prosperity and unique quality of life we must maintain the essential character of our state's natural and built environment through innovative approaches to planning, preservation and development at the state, regional and local level.

New Hampshire's vision is predicated on three themes:

- *Economic opportunity*—freedom to excel in all geographic areas and in a variety of fields (though not necessarily all fields in all places);
- *Choice*—freedom to live in a city, a village, or the woods; and
- *Livability*—keeping the best of what makes New Hampshire the best.

All three themes tie directly to the State's smart growth principles:

- Maintain **traditional compact settlement patterns** to efficiently use land, resources and infrastructure investments.
- Foster the **traditional character** of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging a **human scale** of development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life.
- Incorporate a **mix of uses** to provide variety of housing, employment, shopping, services and social opportunities for all members of the community.
- Preserve New Hampshire's **working landscape** by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts.
- Provide choices and safety in transportation to create **livable, walkable communities** that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles.
- Protect **environmental quality** by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and

maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire.

- **Involve the community** in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community.
- **Manage growth locally** in the New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns to achieve common goals and more effectively address common problems.

Ultimately, to achieve this vision we must, as a state, embrace integrated planning, wherein the many planning sectors called for as components of the State Development Plan are considered jointly, rather than in isolation. For example, housing cannot be addressed without understanding its direct connection to economic development. Simply put, to provide jobs, we must also provide housing affordable to the target employees. The State's economy, largely tourism and forestry related, is dependent upon protection of our natural resources. Transportation is integral to shaping land use and development patterns and ensuring the delivery of goods.

The following matrix presents ten goals to achieve this Plan's vision. These ten goals serve as the foundation to the Plan and each utilizes an integrated planning approach. The matrix compares each of the ten goals to the statutory components for the State Development Plan.

Vision Statement To support New Hampshire's prosperity and unique quality of life we must maintain the essential character of our state's natural and built environment through innovative approaches to planning, preservation and development at the state, regional and local level. Goals	Statutory Components										
	Land Use	Transportation	Public Facilities	Housing	Economic Development	Natural Resources	Natural Hazards	Recreation	Utility and Public Service	Regional Concerns	Cultural and Historic Resources
1 Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging mixed use development that is walkable, sustainable and conducive to community life;	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
2 Protect and preserve New Hampshire's land and water resources including farms, forest lands, wildlife habitats and other critical environmental areas;	✓				✓	✓				✓	
3 Seek innovative approaches in transportation to address; safety; diverse geographic needs; accessibility for people of all ages; preservation of environmental quality; and alternatives that reduce energy consumption;	✓	✓			✓					✓	
4 Promote stewardship of New Hampshire's resources for recreation and other activities that contribute to the health and quality of life for citizens and visitors in New Hampshire;	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
5 Advance state, regional, and local partnerships that create economic opportunities in a manner consistent with a community's master plan;	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
6 Preserve New Hampshire's historic and cultural resources that are an integral part of the state's quality of life, economy, and visual character;	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
7 Create a range of quality housing opportunities and choices for people of all income levels to ensure that communities maintain a diverse population;	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	
8 Develop policies and actions necessary to assure safe and reliable utility services to better account for New Hampshire's changing demographics, and promote energy efficiency;	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	
9 Link state investments in public facilities in a manner that fosters community vitality and efficient use of resources and energy;	✓		✓							✓	
10 Reduce the potential impact of natural hazards, particularly flooding and winter storms, on the State's citizens, guests, and natural and built environments.	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓